



Beauty and the Beast à la Russe

Author(s): Kristin Bidoshi

Source: *Marvels & Tales*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2008), pp. 277-295

Published by: [Wayne State University Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41388879>

Accessed: 06-01-2016 03:34 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Wayne State University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Marvels & Tales*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

KRISTIN BIDOSHI

Beauty and the Beast à la Russe

This essay demonstrates the relevance of combining the syntagmatic model of structural analysis discussed in Vladimir Propp's *Morfologiya volshebnoi skazki* (*Morphology of the Folktale*) with a symbolic analysis and information on the cultural context of versions of "Beauty and the Beast" (ATU 425C) as a unified methodological approach to the interpretation of Russian variants of this tale type.¹ My focus is on the morphological structure of the plot and the set of characters found in four Russian variants of tale type 425C. I also compare the main stylistic features of the Russian folktale variants with Sergei Aksakov's literary rendition of 425C, "Alen'kii tsvetochek" (The Crimson Flower). In order to illuminate the unique interaction between the oral and written narratives, the influence of eighteenth-century French literary tales of this tale type on Russian variants and on Aksakov's rendition is also discussed.

A structural analysis is imperative to this investigation, as it will allow for "establishing a set of specific and ordered elements which comprise the basis of any point-by-point comparison for each tale. The comparison of structures establishes precisely those features which the tales have in common and the manner in which they differ" (Edwards 160). A structural approach therefore isolates the elements of a tale in order to allow one to interpret them within the context of the tale and the implicit context of their relation to one another. Several prominent scholars have advocated for and demonstrated the value of combining structuralism, symbolism, and cultural context in the interpretation of folktales (see, for example, Alan Dundes's "From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folktales"; "Structuralism and Folklore"; "The Symbolic Equivalence of Allomotifs in the Rabbit-Herd (AT 570)"; Bengt Holbek's

Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2008), pp. 277–295. Copyright © 2009 by Wayne State University Press, Detroit, MI 48201.

Interpretation of Fairy Tales: Danish Folklore in a European Perspective; and Kimberly Lau's "Structure, Society, and Symbolism: Toward a Holistic Interpretation of Fairy Tales"). Most recently Lau has deemed this type of interpretation more "holistic" than either a uniquely syntagmatic approach or a unilateral paradigmatic approach (233).²

Although much has been written about "Beauty and the Beast," there is very little research conducted on the morphology of the tales belonging to this narrative type. Most of the existing research centers on either the history of the tale or on the individual stylistic differences of the variants (see, for example, Barchilon; Brewer; Hearne; and Read). In *Beauty and the Beast* Betsy Gould Hearne examines the history of the tale from its origin through the invention of mass media and to the present, but there is no mention about its morphology. In "Istochniki skazki S. T. Aksakova 'Alen'kii tsvetochek'" (Sources of S. T. Aksakov's folktale "The Crimson Flower"), Iu. K. Begunov, a Russian scholar who has carefully traced the history of Sergei Aksakov's literary version of "Beauty and the Beast," provides stylistic observations of several Russian variants of tale type 425C but does not examine the morphological structure of the plots, nor does he provide an analysis of the set of characters. Begunov's observations on the style of the texts therefore do not adequately present the relations among the texts.

I have selected the following folktales as material for investigation: Aleksandr Afanas'ev's "Zakliaty tsarevich" (The Enchanted Prince), I. F. Kovalev's "Chudo morskoe-zver' lesnoi" (Wondrous Sea Monster-Forest Beast), M. M. Korguev's "Alen'koi tsvetochek" (The Crimson Flower), and A. Samokhvalova's "Alen'kii tsvetochek" (The Crimson Flower).³ The analysis of Aksakov's story is based on the text of "The Crimson Flower" found in *Detskie gody Bagrovavnuka* (The Childhood Years of Bagrov's Grandson), published in 1858 (Aksakov 444). There is an English translation of the work by M. C. Beverley published in 1924 titled *The Years of Childhood of Bagrov, the Grandson*.⁴ The material was examined using Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* in order to compare the morphological structure of the plots and of the system of dramatis personae of the variants in question. In addition, Max Lüthi's *The European Folktale: Form and Nature* was used to examine the specific features of style and the continuity of motifs among the texts. Each of the five texts was distinct in its concreteness and style, as it reflected both the general characteristics of the genre as well as the individual preferences of the storytellers, writers, and collectors.

Geographical Distribution of Beauty and the Beast

A brief outline of the history and geographical distribution of Beauty and the Beast (ATU 425C) will aid in the understanding of the Russian tradition. Hans-

Jörg Uther's *The Types of International Folktales* lists Beauty and the Beast under the subheading Supernatural or Enchanted Wife (Husband) or Other Relative, within sections 400 (Man on Quest for his Lost Wife) to 459 (The Make-Believe Son) (Uther 1: 231, 269). More precisely, the index lists the type Beauty and the Beast under number 425C (Uther 1: 252). This subtype of type 425 has the following specific characters and elements: a young daughter, a father, a beast who is transformed at the end into a handsome prince, a flower of unspeakable beauty, and a garden. The basic notion is that the object of the quest is the erotic relationship between a human and a nonhuman; the central motif is that of a girl enamored of a monster.

Uther's classification places Beauty and the Beast under the cycle of tales called The Search for the Lost Husband (Uther 1: 247). According to the Swedish folklorist Jan-Öjvind Swahn, type 425 is known through all of Europe, the Philippines, and Siberia, but subtype 425C is found only in eighteenth-century French literature and in later Russian, German, and Greek folklore (Swahn 296, 311). Swahn maintains that 425C developed from type 425B, and that the difference is that 425B lacks literariness (Swahn 309). Lev Barag and I. P. Berezovskii summarize the plot of "The Crimson Flower" in the following manner: "the youngest of three daughters asks her father to bring her a rare flower; he finds it; the owner of the garden—an enchanted prince in the form of a monster—makes the father exchange the flower for his daughter; after marrying, the monster turns into a handsome young man" (132).

The story of Cupid and Psyche is the earliest recorded predecessor of Beauty and the Beast. It was available to French writers by the mid-seventeenth century. The Roman lawyer Apuleius, born in CE 123, is credited with the earliest known literary rendition of Cupid and Psyche, which was included in his book *The Golden Ass*. The characters depicted were borrowed from an earlier Roman/Greek original. The first literary version of type 425C was a French romance of nearly two hundred pages by Gabrielle Susanne Barbot de Ballon de Villeneuve, titled *La jeune américaine, et les contes marins*, written in 1740 for the entertainment of court friends (Swahn 297).

The theme of Beauty and the Beast—an enchanted prince, a humble girl, and the romantic idea of love transforming a beast into a prince—was a popular one at the end of the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century in French literature and folklore. Swahn's impressive list documents more than forty-five French versions of the tale in circulation between 1767 and 1897.⁵ These tales were popular throughout Europe. Given the interest in French culture that was typical of educated Russians during the eighteenth century, it would follow that the stories made their way to Russia. One such story, Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont's "La Belle et la Bête," was first translated from French into Russian in 1761.⁶ An opera on this theme called *Zémire et Azor* (a libretto

by the French composer André G rtry) was written in 1771 and performed on the Russian stage.⁷ Eighteenth-century Russian readers could also read a French poem translated into Russian as “Krasavitsa i chudovishche” based on the same plot (Begunov 180). In eighteenth-century Russia there was also a surge of interest in Russian literary fairy tales. It was during this time, between 1766 and 1768, that Mikhail Chulkov’s collection of fairy tales titled *Peresmeshnik ili slavenskie skazki* (The Mockingbird and Slavic Fairytales) was published.

The general type 425 is related to totemic myth and to wedding as a ritual. Eleazar Meletinskii asserts that mythological genesis is particularly probable for some universally known fairy tales about marriage to a serpent or other “totemic” creatures. As examples, he cites AT tale types 400–425. In contrast to Propp’s assertion that the classical form of the fairy tale centers on the rituals of initiation, Meletinskii concludes that another ritual used as a basis for the classic form of the fairy tale is the wedding. The wedding is historically a younger ritual, more suited to individual needs of human nature, which is genetically linked to the initiation. In his opinion, the initiation is the ritual counterpart of myth and of the archaic forms of the folktale, and the wedding is the actual foundation of the fairy tales we know from the European tradition. Meletinskii warns that because the myth and the fairy tale have similar plots and semantic structures, it is difficult to separate them from each other. Yet, he points out that “compared to the myth, the folktale, regardless of its closeness to it in terms of plots and semantics, is nonetheless (closer) to literary fiction as such” (167).

There are a number of Russian oral variants of the subtype 425C recorded and published during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Swahn (297) documents only three such texts: Afanes’ev’s “The Enchanted Prince,” Smirnov’s “Morskoi tsar i kupecheskaia doch’” (The King of the Sea and the Merchant’s Daughter), and Korguev’s “The Crimson Flower.” On the other hand, Barag and Berezovskii’s study of Eastern Slavic tales lists seventeen texts related to this subtype (132). Upon closer examination of the plots of these texts, it appears that only ten of the seventeen listed by Barag and Berezovskii are indeed related to the subtype 425C.⁸ I have chosen to analyze four of the ten folk variants, because this selection, although smaller, nevertheless provides sufficient material for a morphological and stylistic analysis that will aid in comparing the folk versions with Sergei Aksakov’s literary version of “The Crimson Flower” (Begunov 184).⁹

Aksakov’s “Crimson Flower”

In the second volume of his autobiographical trilogy, *The Childhood Years of Bagrov’s Grandson*, Sergei Aksakov (1791–1858) presented “The Crimson

Flower” as a rendition of a folktale he had learned as a boy. The trilogy, including *Semeinaia Khronika* (Family Chronicle), *Detskie godi bagrova-vnuka* (Childhood Years), and *Vospominanie* (Reminiscences), was published in 1858. It is a memoir about childhood suffused with numerous elements of literary fiction.¹⁰ Initially Aksakov wanted to write a book for children and adults from a child’s point of view but narrated in a highly literary style. In 1848 he wrote a little message in verse to his favorite granddaughter, Olga Grigorevna, on her sixth birthday. This poem indicated that he was working on such a book and that he would dedicate it to her:

Exactly in a year
Grandpa will send
a little book
to Olia, his dear granddaughter. (Durkin 170)

In fact, such a little book never appeared, but three years later Aksakov completed a “big” book, *The Childhood Years of Bagrov’s Grandson*, which became one of his best-known literary works.

Sergei Aksakov was a Slavophile who strongly believed in the past as a source of inspiration (Durkin 25). He felt nostalgia for simpler times when motives, he believed, were purer and actions more sincere. For him, the Russian people, the common folk, were those who had preserved the essence of the national past and the spirit of the nation. In his *Sergei Aksakov and Russian Pastoral* Andrew Durkin suggests that Aksakov’s infatuation with the idea of freezing childhood stems from his personal family situation. “The preference for perpetual childhood and unchanging family roles,” he writes, “seems to have been part of the Aksakov family tradition” (41). In a letter to his son, Aksakov relays that he first learned “The Crimson Flower” from a female house servant, Pelageia (218).¹¹ In *Childhood Years* he describes in considerable detail the circumstances in which he first heard the tale. Pelageia, known to be a good storyteller, would come to him in the evenings and tell him tales. Aksakov recalls that he stayed awake the whole night that Pelageia first recited “The Crimson Flower” to him, as the story had made such a profound impression on him. Night after night he listened to the story and eventually committed it to memory. Pelageia joins the series of gifted folk performers who not only enchanted their young masters with their folk songs and tales, but who have also become memorable literary characters (e.g., Alexander Pushkin’s nanny, Arina Rodionovna, immortalized in his poem “A Winter Evening,” and Tatiana’s nanny in *Eugene Onegin*). A note appended to this episode in *Childhood Years* conveys the thoughts of the grown-up narrator, concerning the origin and the history of Pelageia’s tale. Aksakov writes, “Now, as I am recovering

the memories of the distant past, I unexpectedly came across a pile of fragments from this folktale; many words and phrases came alive in my head and I tried to recall the [whole] story. [This] strange combination of Oriental fantasy, structuring (of the narrative), and many, obviously translated, [manner of] expressions with the [narrative] devices, images, and the way of speaking of our [Russian] folk, [namely with] the traces left by different male and female story-tellers seemed worthy of my attention" (Aksakov 496).

Begunov has rather thoroughly investigated the possible route through which "The Crimson Flower" might have become part of Pelegeia's repertoire. He asserts that during the Peasant War (1773–75), she and her father fled from their master's estate to Astrakhan, where they spent twenty years (Begunov 181). It was in Astrakhan, between the 1770s and 1790s, he believes, that Pelageia began to solidify her repertoire of fairy tales, which besides "Alen'kii tsvetochek" included such Russian tales as "Tsar-devitsa," "Tsar-ptitsa," and some Eastern fairy tales from *A Thousand and One Nights* (182). Most likely Pelegeia augmented the tales she learned with some of the colorful Russian fairy-tale motifs, colloquial speech, jokes, riddles, and sayings.

Aksakov's literary retelling of "The Crimson Flower" begins with an *initial situation* (α) that involves three unmarried daughters and their father, who is a merchant. The *preparatory section* (a^3) presents the explicit lack as that of the lack of the crimson flower (*alen'kii tsvetochek*). In addition to the explicit lack of this object there is also the implicit lack of a bridegroom, indicated by the fact that the daughter is unmarried (a^1). The implicit lack (the idea of the bridegroom and marriage) finds symbolic representation in the form of the gifts the two older daughters request—namely, a crown of gold and precious stones and a mirror of crystal from the East, items that could be associated with weddings. The father/merchant leaves for countries across the sea (β^1) and has no trouble finding the crown and the mirror. Finally he stumbles upon a beautiful garden, where he notices the exceptionally beautiful crimson flower (δ^1). After plucking the flower, an angry beast appears and threatens to take the father's life. The father explains his reason for plucking the flower (i.e., at the request of youngest daughter) (ζ^1).

The *complication* (A^8) occurs when the beast announces that the father will be free to go only if one of the daughters willingly comes to live with him. The father returns home and tells his daughters about his misfortune. Only the youngest daughter is willing to leave home in order to save her father (B^3). The daughter then leaves home (\uparrow) and with the help of a ring that the beast had sent with the father, she finds herself in the beast's palace. At the palace, the daughter undergoes a number of *preliminary tests*. The donor, the beast, first tests her by carrying on a correspondence on a stone wall, and then by revealing his frightening appearance to her at her request (D^1). The daughter suc-

cessfully passes all of the tests by always being polite and kind to him (E¹). Because of her success throughout the preliminary testing, she is given permission to visit her family. The ring transports her home and then back to the palace again (F¹).

The main task of the female protagonist involves both an explicit and an implicit *difficult task* (M). The explicit difficult task consists of her return to the palace on time, as the beast has allotted her three days and three nights to be away. This task is not exactly resolved, as although she does come back (↓), she is a few minutes late because her sisters have moved all clocks back one hour (N¹). She comes back only to find the beast dead. Thus, she ultimately fails the explicit task and is punished for that. The implicit difficult task is resolved only when she declares her love for the beast and, in a final act of despondency, kisses him. On a symbolic level, the implicit task ultimately involves human perception and valorization when the daughter realizes that she loves the beast for his inner beauty and kindness and that this is more important than his repulsive appearance. Consequently, her successful fulfillment of the implicit task is marvelously rewarded with marriage. In accordance to its message that substance is more important than appearance, this rendition places greater emphasis on the implicit rather than on the explicit task.

The version comes to a close when the spell is broken (K⁸) and the villain is transformed into a handsome prince (T¹). In this way the initial implicit lack is eliminated—in other words, the female protagonist finds her future husband. The girl is praised as a real hero when the prince tells her of the eleven maidens before her (Q) who failed. There is a beautiful wedding, and the happy couple ascends the throne (W*). This final statement forces the reader to become aware of the existence of yet another implicit story line—namely, the beast is not only a villain and the “object of a search,” but he himself is also a seeker, just as the daughter is the “object of a search.” These issues will be addressed in further detail below in the discussion of the system of characters. In summary, the formula for the morphology of the plot, if one assumes that the youngest daughter is the main character, is as follows:

$$(\alpha a^1 a^3 \beta^1 \delta^1 \zeta^1) A^8 B^3 \uparrow D^1 E^1 F^1 M (\uparrow \downarrow) N^1 K^8 T^1 Q W^*$$

If one compares the above formula representing the morphology of Aksakov's “Crimson Flower” with a single-move tale whose main elements center on the binary set of functions “difficult task” and “resolution” as outlined by Propp, it becomes clear that Aksakov's tale closely fits the general model. The initial situation and preparatory sections are in parenthesis, as Propp has chosen not to include these sections with his general formula of the tales whose main elements center on “difficult task” and “resolution.” He states, “Although

this (initial) situation is not a function, it nevertheless is an important morphological element" (Propp 25).

Propp's general formula: $A B C \uparrow D E F G L M J N K \downarrow Pr Rs Q Ex T U W^*$
(Propp 105)

Aksakov's tale: $(\alpha a^1 a^3 \beta^1 \delta^1 \zeta^1) A^8 B^3 \uparrow D^1 E^1 F^1 M \downarrow N^1 K^8 T^1 Q W^*$

The system of *dramatis personae* in Aksakov's tale corresponds to the seven-character fairy-tale model outlined by Propp. First, the beast occupies the role of the "villain." However, of the three constituents one finds, only one—namely the villainy—could be regarded as "the lack" if one considers the final twist of the plot discussed above. The beast here, as is the case with the other versions to be discussed, is similar to the villain in the Russian folktale "Morozko" (Jack Frost). The idea is that there is a possibility of villainous actions, based on the reaction of the heroine. In the case of "Morozko," the daughter who reacted kindly was rewarded with jewels and her life was spared, but the daughter who wasn't kind and generous was immediately killed. Second, the role of the "donor" is also fulfilled by the beast. In this case both functions are present—that is, "the preparation for the transmission of a magical agent" (D) and the "provision of the hero with a magical agent" (F). Third, the role of the "helper" is, in part, also taken by the beast. The function of "spatial transference of the hero" (G) is fulfilled as the beast provides the daughter with a magical ring. Of the other four functions associated with this role—such as liquidation of misfortune or lack (K); rescue from pursuit (Rs); the solution to difficult tasks (N); and "transfiguration of the hero" (T)—the first one (K) may be said to be fulfilled by the existence of the bridegroom, but it is only through the hero's perception that this function is relevant.

The structural tendency of such tales is to combine the roles of the villain, the donor, and the helper and attach them to the same character: the beast. This is in accordance with Propp's explanation of *dramatis personae* and their spheres of action (Propp 79). The relation between spheres of action and *dramatis personae* can be combined to fit three possibilities. The sphere of action can (1) involve one character, (2) be distributed among several different characters, or (3) one character can be involved with several different spheres. Clearly, the beast is an example of the last type of structural distribution of roles. The father (a dispatcher) and the daughter (the hero) belong to the first category.

The role of the "princess" belongs to the person sought after by the main character. Since we have a double tale, it is important to keep in mind that this role is shared between the daughter and the beast, depending on who is defined as the seeker. The more explicit case is that of the daughter as the seeker

and the beast/flower as the object of the search. If the beast is viewed as a stationary seeker, however, then the daughter becomes the person sought after.

The role of the “dispatcher” belongs to the father, who sends his daughter off to the beast. The youngest daughter occupies the role of the “hero.” She performs the functions of “departing on a search” and “wedding.” The role of the “false hero” is not completely fulfilled in this story; it is rather a truncated motif. According to Lüthi, the truncated motif, an element that does not entirely lack function but is unconnected or unexplained, is characteristic of a true folktale (Lüthi 61).

The use of the numbers three and twelve preserves the folktale’s magical element and style. There are two specific numbers that occur in this version. The number three appears four times. The daughters, of course, are a grouping of three. The father sets off to find three gifts. In addition, the merchant is given three days and three nights to make it back home, and the daughter is given three days and three nights to stay at home. The number twelve (four threes) is also important in that the daughter is the twelfth to come to the beast and the only one to break the spell.

Compared to authentic Russian folktales, Aksakov’s “Crimson Flower” is extremely long and saturated with specific detail. Places, characters, and actions are described or explained in great detail, which is not typical for orally performed folktales. Although Aksakov’s introduction is reminiscent of a folktale, the style of the version is clearly not that of a folktale in the proper sense. The literary version frequently provides motivations and explanations for the characters’ actions. For example, the beast makes a genuinely sentimental statement while explaining to the father that he needs his daughter because he is “weary of a lonely life and desires to get himself a companion” (Aksakov 426).

Moving even further away from the folktale style, the daughter’s feelings are not expressed in actions (as is typical of the folktale), but in another sentimental statement. Upon returning and finding the beast dead, she cries out, “Arise, awake, o friend of my heart! I love thee as the bride loves the bridegroom, dear and desired” (Aksakov 444). In each of the folktale versions, the daughter’s emotions are only ever expressed in actions, and never in words.

Clearly, Aksakov’s “Crimson Flower” avoids many of the abstract elements that distinguish a folktale from a work of literature. The style of this piece points to the fact that it is a literary version of a folktale.

Interaction between the Folk and the Literary Variants

In order to understand the interaction among the four Russian folktale variants of Beauty and the Beast, one must examine the similarities as well as the differences among these texts in terms of the morphology of the plot, set of characters,

and the style of the narratives. Aksakov's 1858 version of "The Crimson Flower" is the logical point of comparison for such an investigation. (For a detailed structural analysis of each of the variants, see tables 1 and 2 in the appendix to this essay.) The plot of Afans'ev's "Enchanted Prince" (1863) has a basic morphological structure that is very similar to that of Aksakov's tale. There are, however, substantial differences in terms of the presence of individual motifs as well as in the specific form of the motifs common to both texts. In "The Enchanted Prince," for example, one finds the functions "deceitful agreement" = θ^3 and "preliminary misfortune" = λ , which are absent from Aksakov's text. In "The Enchanted Prince" the daughter rides home in a carriage ("hero rides" = G^2), while in Aksakov's version she is transported by a ring. In "The Enchanted Prince" the prince tells of twelve girls who came before the true heroine, but Aksakov's protagonist mentions only eleven. Although the set of characters in "The Enchanted Prince" is the same as that of Aksakov, the villain in the former is a three-headed snake and in the latter a beast. Finally, the most striking difference is the style of these two variants. "The Enchanted Prince" is less descriptive and much closer to the conventional poetics of oral tales, while Aksakov's version, although heavily stylized in order to closely resemble the Russian fairy tale, is unmistakably a literary rendition for reasons already discussed above.

The plot of Kovalev's "Wondrous Sea Monster-Forest Beast" (1941) exhibits a general morphological structure that is almost identical to that found in Aksakov's version. The only difference here is the change in the specific number of girls who have visited the beast. The set of characters is the same as well. In both cases the narrative reflects strong interest in details, although Kovalev's tale is still closer to the compact renditions of the other folk storytellers (e.g., "The Enchanted Prince") than to Aksakov's heavily ornamental and stylized rendition. Of all the folktales examined here, this variant is the one most closely connected in all three aspects to Aksakov's "Crimson Flower."

The morphological structure of the plot of Korguev's 1939 version does not deviate much from Aksakov's. The main elements missing from Korguev's folk rendition are: "the father does not tell the beast of his daughters" (ζ^1) and "the prince does not tell Oleksandra how many girls came before her" (Q). In both texts the seven-role set of characters is presented in its entirety. Nevertheless, Korguev's style is very different from Aksakov's. Korguev's tale is extremely short and offers an excellent example of the folktale's ability to reduce the descriptive component to a minimum without affecting the morphology of the plot or the set of the characters.

The morphological structure of the plot of Samokhvalova's "Crimson Flower" (1970) differs slightly from Aksakov's version. This folktale is missing the following secondary functions: "the father does not tell the beast of his

daughters" (ǰ'), "the means of transportation" (F) is not indicated, and "the prince does not tell the youngest how many girls came before her" (Q). It, too, is rather concise and displays a number of features that are typical of the oral tradition. An outline of the possible connections among the four folktale versions, in regard to which ones were directly influenced by Aksakov's work, yields the following genealogical picture: Kovalev's "Wondrous Sea Monster-Forest Beast" is the folk rendition closest to Aksakov's "Crimson Flower."

The results of a comparative analysis of the literary works and the four folktale versions of the tale type show that the literary text follows very closely the morphological structure of the plot and the system of *dramatis personae* of the fairy tale. The most extensive differences are found on the level of style. Aksakov's version is a stylized literary tale that is significantly removed from the oral renditions of the plot by the peasant storytellers. Despite his deliberate use of specific "markers" of the folktale genre—that is, the depthless world of the characters, the magical number three, and repetition of words—Aksakov's creation is a work of literature. Indeed, the high concentration of traditional folktale formulae and other narrative devices is one of the main indications that this is a stylization and not an authentic folk narrative.

The presence of individual and unusual details is the best proof of possible genealogical connections among individual folktale texts that exhibit similar development of the plot. This axiom, which emerged as a result of the extensive research on the genealogical relations of various folktales conducted at the end of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century, is certainly valid for my investigation. The more unusual the shared detail, the higher the probability of either a direct relation between the texts or a shared common ancestor/text. Therefore, my study of the possible connections among the four folk/oral variants and Aksakov's text must take into consideration a number of specific motifs shared by the literary version and one or more of the folktales. As I will also consider possible links with texts other than Aksakov's tale, motifs shared by the oral narratives but absent from Aksakov's story will be of particular interest. (The results of my analysis are presented in detail in table 3 in the appendix.) Below I offer detailed observations on this analysis.

Of the fourteen features I have selected, four are unusual enough to be proof of genetic links between Aksakov's work and the individual folktales, namely: (1) the Persian origin of the garment requested by one of the sisters, (2) the number of girls who failed the test of the beast, (3) the writing on the wall as a means of communication with the beast, and (4) the explanation of the transformation of the beast as a result of a spell cast by a male sorcerer. My conclusions, however, are far from definitive, because as the first detail is present in Kovalev's version and in Aksakov's work, the second one appears in Afans'ev's, Kovalev's, and Aksakov's renditions, while the third one appears

in Samokhvalova's, Kovalev's, and Aksakov's adaptations. The fourth one is absent from Aksakov's version altogether but is shared by Kovalev's and Samokhvalova's versions.

The total number of similarities among the singled-out details and the individual tales is as follows: Kovalev's "Wondrous Sea Monster–Forest Beast"—twelve shared details; Samokhvalova's "Crimson Flower"—six; Korguev's "Crimson Flower"—six; and Afans'ev's "Enchanted Prince"—five. However, in spite of these close similarities, "Wondrous Sea Monster–Forest Beast" has one additional important specific detail that is not found in Aksakov's "Crimson Flower" but exists in Samokhvalova's tale—namely, the explanation of the transformation of the prince into a beast. This fact indicates that Kovalev's "Wondrous Sea Monster–Forest Beast," and for that matter Samokhvalova's "Crimson Flower," are not necessarily connected *only* to Aksakov's tale.

A probable explanation of this situation is to postulate that there are actually *three* channels of transmission of the tale type. One possibility involves one or more common ancestors of Aksakov's work and some of the folktales, which came through the eighteenth-century Russian translations and transformations of the French literary tales. The second one implies connections within the oral tradition *after* the birth of the texts/ancestors. The third implies the direct influence of Aksakov's text upon the folktales recorded *after* the time his work became widely popular among Russian readers.

Conclusions

Such a comparative morphological and stylistic analysis of Aksakov's tale "Alen'kii tsvetochek" and the four Russian folktales belonging to the same narrative type, along with a symbolic analysis and information on the cultural context of versions of Beauty and the Beast, allows for conclusions that are not only more precise than, but are also quite different from, those of Begunov. We have noted, for example, that the the most important facet of the Russian versions of folktale type ATU 425C is certainly not the issue of origin but rather the insight it provides into the dynamic of the relations between oral folk narratives and literature.

Aksakov's literary work, which has been immensely popular among Russian readers ever since it was published in 1858, is directly connected with the oral tradition. As mentioned in his memoirs, these ties involve, on one hand, his recollections of the numerous performances of the tale by the serf-woman Pelageia, which he saw as a young boy, as well as his own performances (at that same time), which closely followed the content and the narrative style of Pelageia. On the other hand, the memoirs also mention Aksakov's early knowledge of the Russian translations of two French literary renditions of the tale—

namely, Beaumont's "La Belle et la Bête" and Gértrý's *Zémire et Azor* (Begunov 179). Obviously, at the time Aksakov wrote his work, he had in mind not only his recollections of Pelageia's performances but also the Russian translations of the French literary tales.

Conversely, as Begunov suggests, Pelageia's own text was probably a fusion of the oral renditions/transformations of the translations from French, which existed in eighteenth-century Russia not only in printed form but also in manuscript copies (Begunov 182). Begunov's conclusion that the tale type existed in Russian folklore before Aksakov is certainly convincing. However, his hypothesis that there were genuinely Russian folktales of the type ATU 425C even before the translations/transformations of the French stories is unfounded. Most likely, in Russia the plot of ATU 425C was subjected *twice* to transformation due to a transition from literary texts to the oral tradition: the first time the literary texts were the Russian translations of the French literary works; the second time it was Aksakov's story "The Crimson Flower" that was of influence. As my analysis has demonstrated, this secondary folklorization does not significantly affect either the morphology or the set of characters of ATU 425C. The most significant fluctuations concern the style and the size of the oral renditions. The issue of the relationship between the manuscript translations of the French literary works and the Russian oral and written narrative works is beyond the scope of this essay but certainly deserves further investigation.

Appendix

Table 1: The Functions of Dramatis Personae

Propp's "difficult task" fairy tale		A B C ↑ D E F G L M J N K ↓ Pr Rs Q Ex T U W*:
Aksakov's "The Crimson Flower"	(α a ¹ a ³ β ¹ δ ¹ ζ ¹)	A ⁸ B ³ ↑ D ¹ E ¹ F ¹ M (↓↑) N ¹ K ⁸ T ¹ Q W*
Afanas'ev's "The Enchanted Prince"	(α a ¹ β ¹ δ ¹ η ¹ θ ³ λ)	A ⁸ B ³ ↑ D ⁷ E ¹ F ⁶ G ² (↓↑) N ¹ K ⁸ T ¹ W*
Kovalev's "Wondrous Sea Monster-Forest Beast"	(α a ¹ a ³ β ¹ δ ¹ ζ ¹)	A ⁸ B ³ ↑ D ¹ E ¹ F ¹ M (↓↑) N ¹ K ⁸ T ¹ Q W*
Korguev's "The Crimson Flower"	(α a ¹ a ³ β ¹ δ ¹)	A ⁸ B ² ↑ D ¹ E ¹ F ¹ M (↓↑) N ¹ K ⁸ T ¹ W*
Samokhvalova's "The Crimson Flower"	(a ¹ a ³ β ¹ δ ¹)	A ⁸ B ³ ↑ D ¹ E ¹ G M (↓↑) N K ⁸ W*

Table 2: Distribution of Fairy-Tale Set of Roles Among the Dramatis Personae

ROLE	Afanas'ev's "The Enchanted Prince"	Kovalev's "Wondrous Sea Monster- Forest Beast"	Korguev's "Crimson Flower"	Samokhvalova's "Crimson Flower"	Aksakov's "Crimson Flower"
1. Villain/Seeker	three-headed snake (chudishche zmei s tremia golovami)	sea-forest monster (zver')	monster (chudovishch)	monster (zver')	monster/beast (chudovishch and lesnoi zver' - chudo morskoe)
2. Donor	three-headed snake	sea-forest monster	monster	-	beast
3. Helper	three-headed snake	sea-forest monster	monster	-	beast
4. Sought for Person	girl and the snake	Masha and the monster	girl and the monster	girl and the monster	girl and the beast
5. Dispatcher	father/merchant	father/merchant	father/merchant	father and the mother (starik so staruxoi)	father/merchant
6. Hero	girl	Masha	Oleksandra	girl	girl
7. False Hero	sisters	sisters	-	sisters	sisters

Table 3: Key Motifs Indicating Probable Genetic Links Among the Texts

Motifs:	Afanas'ev's "The Enchanted Prince"	Kovalev's "Wondrous Sea Monster—Forest Beast"	Korguev's "Crimson Flower"	Samokhvalova's "Crimson Flower"	Aksakov's "Crimson Flower"
1. Means of Transportation					
a. to beast's castle	a. the father drove her	a. magic ring	a. magic ring	a. the father led her	a. magic ring
b. to parent's home	b. carriage	b. magic ring	b. magic ring	b. not specified	b. magic ring
2. Means of resolution of the difficult task	kisses and embraces the beast	kisses snout	embraces the beast and cries/laments	falls to the ground and cries	kiss
3. Explanation of the transformation of the prince into a beast	-	spell cast by evil uncle/sorcerer (information given by the prince himself)	-	spell cast by evil male sorcerer (information given by the narrator)	-
4. The number of other girls who failed the beast's tests	twelve	twelve	-	-	eleven
5. Communication with the beast	-	fiery writing on the wall	-	writing on the wall	fiery writing on a marble wall
6. Period of time spent on the visit home	one day	three days and three nights	no more than one week	two or three hours	three days and three nights

Table 3 (continued): Key Motifs Indicating Probable Genetic Links Among the Texts:

Motifs:	Afanas'ev's "The Enchanted Prince"	Kovalev's "Wondrous Sea Monster-Forest Beast"	Korguev's "Crimson Flower"	Samokhvalova's "Crimson Flower"	Aksakov's "Crimson Flower"
7. Means of delay used by the sisters	rubbed onions in their eyes	turned all clocks back one hour	(not applicable, the sisters are not mentioned)	turned the clocks back (unspecified amount of time)	turned clocks back one hour
8. The Persian origin of the garment requested by one of the sisters	-	first sister: a golden crown (owned by the Queen of Persia)	-	-	second sister: a crystal gown (owned by a foreign queen and guarded by Persian warriors)
9. Name of female protagonist	-	Masha	Oleksandra	-	-
10. Type of flower	a flower she drew on a piece of paper	the most beautiful crimson flower	the most aromatic crimson flower	a crimson flower	the most beautiful crimson flower
11. Characteristic of male protagonist	three-headed snake	sea-forest monster	monster	monster	beast/monster/ sea-forest monster
12. Father's occupation	merchant	merchant	merchant	-	merchant
13. Place of beast's death	in the garden in the pond	in the garden, on top of a mound embracing the crimson flower	in the garden embracing the flower	place unspecified (with the flower)	in the garden on a small hill embracing the crimson flower
14. Sleeping with the beast in the same bed	yes	-	-	-	-

Notes

1. Propp's *Morphology* first appeared in Russian in 1928. It was published in English translation in 1958. A second edition, revised by Louis A. Wagner and with an introduction by Alan Dundes, appeared in 1968. Hans-Jörg Uther's revised version of the Aarne-Thompson index lists tale type 425C as Beauty and the Beast (see 1: 252).
2. I assume that Lau refers to Propp's theoretical model as being representative of a uniquely syntagmatic approach while Claude Lévi-Strauss, whose analyses tend to focus exclusively on binary relationships, most likely serves as her model of a purely paradigmatic approach.
3. The following are specific page numbers in which the Russian texts are located: Afanas'ev 138, Kovalev 84, Korguev 242, and Samokhvalova 156.
4. All translations from the Russian originals, unless otherwise noted, are mine.
5. For specific information on the various tales and literary renditions (indicated in Swahn as subtype C) published between these years, see Swahn 138–45. Swahn offers content, source, title, and year of publication of the various works.
6. The text was translated by Peter Svistunov and published in St. Petersburg in 1761. See Kondakov's *Svodnyi katalog russkoi knigi grazhdanskoi pečati XVIII veka* for further reference.
7. For the Russian translation, see Gértry, "Zemira i Azor," an opera in four acts. Translated from the French by N. Novikov and Company, Moscow, 1783.
8. I concur with Begunov that the following texts are not related to tale type 425C: G. Bondar's recording of "Annushka Who Doesn't Laugh," A. M. Smirnov's "The Sea Czar and Merchant's Daughter," Vl. Bakhtin's and V. P. Krugliashova's recording of "The Little Dish and the Sweet Apple," and G. Ia. Simin's recording of "Mare's Head" (Begunov 183).
9. Begunov studied the following ten Russian folktale variants: Afanas'ev's "Zakliaty tsarevich" (The Enchanted Prince), "Alaia roza" (Alaia Rose) (collector B. Gerasimov), A. M. Smirnov's "Morskoi tsar i kupecheskaia doch'" (The King of the Sea and the Merchant's Daughter), Kovalev's "Chudo morskoe-zver' lesnoi" (Wondrous Sea Monster-Forest Beast), Korguev's "Alen'koi tsvetochek" (The Crimson Flower), Chernyshev's "Orekhovaia vetka" (Walnut Branch), Sokolova's "Orekhovaia vetka" (Walnut Branch), Mitropol'skaia's "Orekhovaia vetka" (Walnut Branch), "Alen'kii tsvetochek" (The Crimson Flower) (collector Tumilevich), and Samokhvalova's "Alen'kii tsvetochik" (The Crimson Flower).
10. Works such as Leo Tolstoy's autobiographical novel *Detstvo* (Childhood) (1852) and Ivan Goncharov's fictional piece "Son Oblomova" (Oblomov's Dream) in his novel *Oblomov* (1849) present the wide range of literary forms used to render childhood reminiscences in mid-nineteenth-century Russia (Durkin 169).
11. As a child, Aksakov was frequently ill and confined to his room.

Works Cited

- Afanas'ev, Aleksandr. "Zakliaty tsarevich." *Narodnye russkie skazki*. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1957. 2: 138–39.
- Aksakov, Sergei. *Detskie gody Bagrova-vnuka*. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1954.

- . *Semeinaia khronika*. Vienna: Knigoiz. "Rus," 1922.
- Barag, Lev Grigorevich, and I. P. Berezovskii. *Vostochnoslavianskaia skazka sravnitel'nyi ukazatel' siuzhetov*. Leningrad: Nauka, 1979.
- Barchilon, Jacques. "Beauty and the Beast." *Modern Language Review* 56 (1961): 81–82.
- Begunov, Iu. K. "Istochniki skazki S. T. Aksakova 'Alen'kii tsvetochek.'" *Russkaia literatura* 1 (1983): 179–87.
- Beverly, M. C., trans. "The Years of Childhood of Bagrov, the Grandson." *Chronicles of a Russian Family*. London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1924.
- Brewer, Derek. "The Battleground of Home: Versions of Fairy Tales." *Encounter* 35 (April 1980): 52–61.
- Chernyshev, V. I. "Orehovaia vetka." *Russkie skazki v izdaniakh XVIII veka*. Leningrad: Nauka, 1934. 586–12.
- Chulkov, Mikhail. *Peresmeshnik ili slavenskie skazki*. Moscow: Sov. Rossiia, 1987.
- Dundes, Alan. "The Symbolic Equivalence of Allomotifs in the Rabbit-Herd (AT 570)." *Arv* 36 (1980): 91–98. Rpt. in *Parsing through Customs*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1987. 167–77.
- . "Structuralism and Folklore." *Studia Fennica* 20 (1976): 75–93.
- . "From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folktales." *Journal of American Folklore* 75 (1962): 95–105.
- Durkin, Andrew. *Sergei Aksakov and Russian Pastoral*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1983.
- Edwards, Jay. "Structural Analysis of the Afro-American Trickster Tale." *Black American Literature Forum* 15.4 (1981): 155–64.
- Gerasimov, B. G. "Alaia roza." *Skazki, sobrannye v zapadnykh predgor'iakh Altaia*. Moscow: Russkoe geograficheskoe obshchestvo, 1913. 8–10.
- Gértry, André. *Zémire et Azor*. Paris: De l'imprimerie de P. Robert-Christophe Ballard, 1771.
- Goncharov, Ivan. *Oblomov*. Leningrad: Nauka, 1987.
- Hearne, Betsy Gould. *Beauty and the Beast*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989.
- Holbek, Bengt. *Interpretation of Fairy Tales: Danish Folklore in a European Perspective*. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1987.
- Kondakov, I. P. *Svodnyi katalog russkoi knigi grazhdanskoi pečati XVIII veka*. Kniga vtoraia. Moskva: Gosudarstvannaia biblioteka SSR imeni V. I. Lenina, 1964. 145–46.
- Korguev, M. M. "Alen'koi tsvetochek." *Skazki karel'skogo Belomor'ia*. Kniga vtoraia. Petrozavolsk: Karelskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1939. 242–43.
- Kovalev, I. F. "Chudo morskoe-zver' lesnoi." *Skazki I. F. Kovaleva*. Red. V. Bonch-Bruevich. Moskva: Gosudarstvennyi literaturnyi muzei, 1941. 84–85.
- Lau, Kimberly. "Structure, Society, and Symbolism: Toward a Holistic Interpretation of Fairy Tales." *Western Folklore* 55.3 (1996): 233–43.
- Leprince de Beaumont, Jeanne-Marie. "La Belle et la Bête." *La Belle et la Bête et autres contes Madame de Beaumont, Madame D'Aulnoy*. Paris: Hachette jeunesse, 1996.
- Lüthi, Max. *The European Folktale: Form and Nature*. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1982.
- Meletinskii, Eleazar. *Poetika mifa*. Moskva: Nauka, 1976.
- Mitropol'skaia, N. K. "Orehovaia vetka." *Russkii fol'klor v Litve*. Vilnius: otd Skazki, 1975. 215–66.
- Propp, Vladimir Ia. *Morfologiya volshebnoi skazki*. Sankt-Peterburg: Nauka, 1996.

- . *Morphology of the Folktale*. Trans. Laurence Scott. Rev. and ed. Louis A. Wagner. 2nd ed. Austin: U of Texas P, 1968.
- Read, Herbert. *On Beauty: Beauty and the Beast*. Dallas: Spring, 1987.
- Samokhvalova, A. "Alen'kii tsvetochek." *Skazki terskovo berega belogo moria*. Ed. D. M. Balashov. Leningrad: Nauka, 1970. 156–57.
- Smirnov, A. M. "Morskoi tsar i kupecheskaia doch'." *Tvorchestvo slova v narodnoi skazke*. Moskva: Rabotnik prosveshcheniia, 1927. 75–86.
- Sokolov, Iu. M. *Russkii fol'klor*. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe pedagog. izd-vo, 1941.
- Svistunov, Peter. *Detskoe uchilishche*. Sankt Peterburg: Tip. sukhoputn. kad. korpusa, 1761–67.
- Swahn, Jan-Öjvind. *The Tale of Cupid and Psyche*. Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1955.
- Tolstoy, Lev. *Detstvo*. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izd-vo khudozh. literatury, 1955.
- Tumilevich, O. F. "Alen'kii tsvetochek." *Ukrains'ka narodna poetichna tvorchist'*. Kiev, 1958. 354–22.
- Uther, Hans-Jörg. *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography*. 3 vols. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 2004.
- Villeneuve, Gabrielle de. "La Belle et la Bête." *La jeune américaine, et les contes marins. Nouveau Cabinet des fées*. Vol. 12. Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1978.